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THE CASE FOR MEDITATION {page 16}

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The Big Issue

Served best with side of chefs' scorn

- Center City's Restaurant Week burns some culinarians
- 'Dumbs down cuisine,' they argue
- Organizer defends its promotional success

{pages 08-09}

▶ Chef Todd Wentz, of McCrossen's Tavern in Fairmount, is offering an "Anti-Restaurant Week" menu.

PAIGE OZAROSKI/METRO

Sports

New year, same issues for Flyers

Orange and Black brace for NHL's second half Is trade imminent? Which goaltender gets playoff minutes? {page 21}

Brad and Angie may finally wed

And the reason he may propose is not one most people choose {page 10}

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Phanatic as celluloid hero

PHILADELPHIA. The Phillie Phanatic made a cameo on Thursday night's episode of 30 Rock as a one-year "business-versary" gift for a Philadelphia partner of Kabletown's Vice President Jack Donaghy.

Of course, the beloved mascot — which does look somewhat like a sea creature, now that the show has pointed it out through a series of subtitled Phanatic-phrases — was, along with a scotch fountain, delivered to the wrong floor, causing a comedy of errors. METRO/AW

Nutter's crime strategy needs Harrisburg's help

Seven new tactics by Philly cops to get tougher on crime, more incentive on helping still needs state support Harrisburg still not friendly to gun control

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

▶ Prosecutors will push for stiffer jail sentences for carrying illegal guns.

While Mayor Michael Nutter last week announced plans to employ new tactics to deal with the same old problem of illegals guns in Philadelphia, gun-reform advocates say the program's success will ultimately be minimal without help from Harrisburg.

Among Nutter's tools, prosecutors will push for stiffer jail sentences for those convicted of carrying illegal guns and rewards will be offered to those who help authorities recover them. But the city is still plagued by trafficking of illegal guns and straw-purchasing, when people purchase guns for those who cannot legally buy them.

"This is another example of cities having to take measures on their own because the state has turned their back," said Max Nacheman, executive director of CeaseFirePA, a statewide organization that has lobbied for responsible gun-reform.

In 2007, city lawmakers passed five pieces of legislation only to have them thrown out in a court challenge by the National Rifle Association. Attempts to get the laws passed at the state level have failed.

The overturned laws seriously hinder the city, Nacheman insisted, along with a poor system for background checks. "I think that cities are really going to be approaching this problem from a deficit. If we have states working with us, it's so much easier."

State Sen. Larry Farnese, of Philadelphia, agreed. Farnese's proposal to close the "Florida loophole," which allows Pennsylvania residents to receive a permit to carry despite being denied in the commonwealth, has stalled.

"Unless the city is given the opportunity to get its own laws, or my gun [legislation] is passed … then we're not going to be able to provide a safe city for people to work in and live in."

SOLOMON D. LEACH
sleach@metro.us

No homicides during the weekend, police say

PHILADELPHIA. Though there were no homicides during the weekend, police were investigating the body of a young man found in a Northeast Philadelphia creek yesterday afternoon.

The man, believed to be in his late teens to early 20s, was found face down in a creek by a resident behind the 3500 block of Vinton Road. METRO/AW

32 Murders through first 25 days of the year, according to police, who said no slayings occurred Friday night through yesterday.

Data

$21.5K

Cash stolen from the 10th and Filbert Greyhound bus terminal by three armed men, who forced employees into a caged area and robbed the safe and counter early Sunday morning. METRO

In the news

Headless goat
A man found boxes and bags containing animal parts, including a headless goat, in Pennypack Park Friday night. The man was walking his dog around 11:54 p.m. when he saw several trash bags and a box with goat and chicken parts. The bags contained dead roosters and chickens. METRO/AW

▶ Phillie Phanatic

Mumia into general population

PENNSYLVANIA. Former death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose execution sentence was overturned last year, joined the prison's general population for the first time Friday since he was convicted for the 1981 murder of Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner, according to the Department of Corrections.

Abu-Jamal had spent seven weeks in solitary confinement since his move to medium-security Mahanoy. METRO/AW

Pa. pricklers become new delicacy

PENNSYLVANIA. After establishing a statewide hunting season for porcupines last year, the state Game Commission is facing an unintended consequence: A potential black market for porcupine meat, according to a report from the Intelligencer Journal-Lancaster New Era.

The Commission created the hunting season with the intent of allowing landowners to control the population of the rodents, which can chew through wood siding. METRO/AW

Construction. Dilworth

▶ Smashed concrete could be seen yesterday on Dilworth Plaza, which has been vacant since Nov. 30.

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

Ground already broken — not officially

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood will be in town to usher in work on the $50 million makeover of the highly visible plaza just west of City Hall. Mayor Michael Nutter will also give remarks from the ninth floor of the Municipal Services Building, which overlooks the empty plaza. Occupy Philly members had planned a protest last night. METRO

Santorum still at CHOP with daughter

UNIVERSITY CITY. Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum canceled campaign events yesterday in Florida after his 3-year-old daughter was admitted to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Santorum, running behind Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich ahead of Tuesday's primary, intends to return to Florida and resume his campaign schedule as soon as possible, but Isabella Santorum remained at CHOP last night, suffering from pneumonia in both lungs. METRO

"Rick intends to return to Florida and resume the campaign schedule as soon as is possible."
CAMPAIGN SPOKESMAN HOGAN GIDLEY

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Yannick gives gusto to Ball

Philly Orchestra's leader says he'll be in town longer than expected
155th Academy Ball this weekend noticeably giddy despite bankruptcy

Yannick "the next Bernstein"

- Johanna McNeil Lewis, a Ball co-chairman and the academy's main benefactor, said, "We wanted ball attendees this year to experience the Academy as its first guests in 1857 did."
- John Saler of law firm Stradley Ronon, who previously convinced Wawa to underwrite the city's Welcome America Independence Day celebrations, was honored to be asked to be one of the chairmen of this year's ball.
- "Yannick is a rock star, the next Leonard Bernstein," Ronon said of the 36-year-old conductor.

Although Yannick Nezet-Seguin doesn't officially take over as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra until Oct. 18, the charismatic conductor has already become the orchestra's superhero.

Since it declared bankruptcy in April, he is almost singlehandedly fighting to restore the reputation of the Philadelphia Orchestra by persuading his illustrious friends in the musical world, such as soprano Renee Fleming, to appear and donating two additional weeks of appearances for a total of nine this season. He also will take the Orchestra back to the Academy of Music, a Philadelphia favorite, for a series of concerts in June.

At a public Q&A held at the Kimmel Center last week — another example of his efforts to lead the orchestra in a more democratic and accessible way — the man who seems suited for single name recognition, Yannick, declared, "I want to be in the hearts of all Philadelphians."

"I am overwhelmed with joy to be part of the history of this magnificent building."
YANNICK NEZET-SEGUIN

He plans to work on joint productions with other performing arts groups and move the orchestra into theater, concerts and opera.

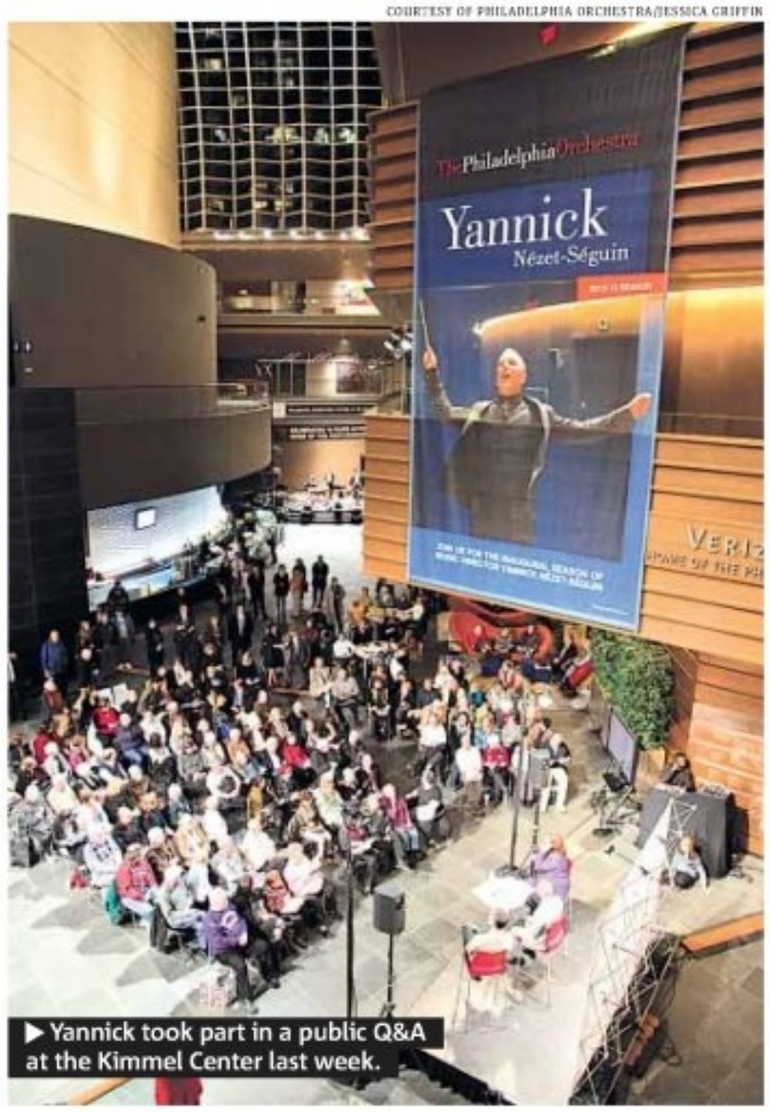
On Saturday night, Yannick led an orchestra performance at the 155th Academy of Music Concert and Ball.

"I am overwhelmed with joy to be part of the history of this magnificent building," he exclaimed from the stage before 1,350 guests, which included Gov. Tom Corbett, Aramark CEO Joseph Neubauer and members of Sun Oil's and Comcast's founding families.

They paid from $350 to $2,500 to enter an Academy of Music rolled back in time to give it a "Phantom of Opera" look. The front section of seats were removed and replaced with cocktail tables. Sheer white curtains were hung in place of the traditional heavy red brocade curtains. After the concert, revelers kept the Grand Lady of Broad Street awake into late into the evening.

LAURA GOLDMAN

COURTESY OF PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA/JESSICA GRIFFIN



▶ Yannick took part in a public Q&A at the Kimmel Center last week.

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Gingrich alliance resists Newtering

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PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Who will be the Republican nominee? Tell us at metro.us/forum or e-mail brayden.simms@metro.us.

We wrote about it this weekend, but the Newtering of Speaker Gingrich shows no signs of slowing as establishment Republicans — that is, the very group in which Mr. Gingrich can rightly claim to squarely belong — rush to prevent his most recent surge. There is now, however, one significant update: His cavalry have arrived.

Sarah Palin — remember her? — was back Friday with a scathing take-down of the lamestream media, "Cannibals in GOP Establishment Employ Tactics of the Left," in which the down-home diva lamented Republicans' co-option of such allegedly liberal strategies as "singl[ing] someone out and destroy[ing] his or her record" and "using the media," neither of which anyone on the right has ever purposefully employed, we're sure.

Disregarding the oozing hypocrisy of someone employed by Fox News questioning use of the media; ignoring the fact that Palin here frames the idea of judging candidates based on their governing records as some sort of liberal crime; and seeing as there is very little chance that she actually authored this extremist screed herself — wait, actually, we really aren't able to do any of those things.

Gingrich also received some support from another right-wing icon, pizzaman Herman Cain, who over the weekend threw his weight behind the maligned candidate. This marks what could be interpreted as Cain's third endorsement of the season: The "unconventional" first was declared for "the people" in an embarrassing media stunt; the second for himself, despite having dropped out, owing to his participation in a bit of electoral parody at Stephen Colbert's "Rock Me Like a Herman Cain South Cain-olina Primary Rally"; and now this.

Something tells us Gingrich is going to have to do better.

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages.

Out with the old, in with the news

"Some of the articles, some of the attacks on me, have been breathtakingly dishonest. And I think as that deepens, the conservatives are going to come together and decide they do not want a Massachusetts liberal to be the Republican nominee."

GINGRICH, SUNDAY ON ABC NEWS. THIS CLAIM – THAT ROMNEY AND THE GOP ESTABLISHMENT ARE SO SCARED OF A GINGRICH CANDIDACY THAT THEY'VE BEEN RESORTING TO LIES – IS, OF COURSE, TRUE. WHAT'S UNTRUE IS THE IMPLICATION THAT GINGRICH ESCHEWS THIS SORT OF POLITICAL GAME. HERE, HE USES THE L-WORD TO SMEAR FORMER MASS. GOV. ROMNEY, WHO IN REALITY IS MIND-NUMBINGLY CONSERVATIVE, DESPITE THE CURRENT MEDIA NARRATIVE.

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- Michael Vitez, Philadelphia Inquirer, 1/20/2011

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THE BIG ISSUE

WITH METRO'S
MONICA WEYMOUTH

@monicaatmetro monica.weymouth@metro.us

- As Center City District's Restaurant Week enters its second week, we check in with some chefs who won't be serving up the $35 three-course menu
- Marc Vetri, Mike Stollenwerk and other big names aren't fans

CHEWING OUT RESTAURANT WEEK

For the first time, chef Mike Stollenwerk is officially, undeniably cooking in Center City. His newly expanded Fish didn't move far — from 17th and Lombard streets to 1234 Locust St. — but it was enough to qualify him to participate in Center City District's Restaurant Week.

Not that he's taking them up on the offer.

"I think they change the boundaries every year — either that or they don't like me," says Stollenwerk of previous trouble participating (he's not paranoid — the boundaries do change; this year they have expanded to include North Broad Street). "But after hearing the horror stories from other chefs, I'm kind of glad we never went through with it, and we won't be this year. Everyone comes out for Restaurant Week thinking they'll get the experience of what the restaurant has to offer, but it's really not the case. If you come to Fish, we want to give you the experience of Fish — we don't want to dumb it down for two weeks."

Stollenwerk doesn't need the business generated by offering the three-course, $35 menu. After food magazine Bon Appetit called out his pint-sized BYOB Little Fish as one of the country's best seafood restaurants in 2008, filling tables isn't a concern.

For Meme chef and owner David Katz, however, a little Restaurant Week publicity wouldn't hurt. He's technically not in the Center City District at 22nd and Spruce streets, but despite stellar reviews and storied fried chicken, he's close enough to wonder if he's losing business to those just a couple blocks away who were invited to participate.

"We've done the $35 three-course anyway. We've done OK. But not being on their literature — not being plastered all over the city — really hurts us," says Katz. "If Restaurant Week was open to us? I don't know. It's kind of a tough decision. I can see the complaints about the staff being run ragged, and it can be tough when you have a lot of restaurants, but I might participate. We're 38 seats — all we would have to do is sell a drink to hit our average check."

As for McCrossen's Tavern, they're having their own party in Fairmount. Chef Todd Wentz's "Anti-Restaurant Week" menu one-ups the original's offer with a $30 three-course meal (plus $15 for wine pairings) that's in the same league as any Center City fare: Braised veal cheeks, wild boar cavatelli and roasted spotted skate round out the menu's second course options.

"We are not so much 'sitting it out' as we were not allowed to participate," says Lauren Harris, McCrossen's general manager and sommelier. "So we say, 'Not invited to the party? Throw a better one.'"

By the numbers

165,000

Guests for dinner at last year's two-week fall Restaurant Week. There are two events each year run by the Center City District

28,000

for lunch at last fall's event. The city's annual Restaurant Weeks are around the same time every year, one in winter and one in fall

124

Restaurants participating in the two-week event this year

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RIKARD LARMA/METRO

▶ On Twitter, chef Richard Landau addressed Vedge dishes such as portobello carpaccio: "Dear food, I respect you too much to pimp you out on restaurant week."

Vedge out — for now

When husband-and-wife vegan restaurateurs Richard Landau and Kate Jacoby closed Horizons in the South Street District to open Vedge in Washington Square West, they found themselves looking at much bigger rent checks for the new, larger space.

"I didn't want to lead anyone in here dishonestly and make them think they were getting this deal when they really weren't. I hate to eat my words; but for now, we're taking the high road."
LANDAU

Even so, they're holding out on signing up for Restaurant Week.

"We don't know if we're going to sit this out forever — as a means of survival we might not be able to," admits Landau. "We want to support ourselves — we have a 4-year-old son and employees, so it's not all hippie s—, but it was never about the money. This seems like a cheap buck. I look around at the quality of the food and the staff that we have here, and I don't know if I can put us through that."

PAIGE OZAROSKI/METRO

▶ Chef Todd Wentz, of McCrossen's Tavern in Fairmount, is offering an "Anti-Restaurant Week" menu.

On the Web: Marc Vetri

Marc Vetri has been one of the more vocal opponents of Restaurant Week.

The chef took to his Facebook blog earlier this month with some strong words: "Just because someone tells you that you're getting a deal, it doesn't mean that you really are. RW is a short sighted way for restaurants to make a quick buck by lowering their standards, making one menu so its easy to turn and burn, while basically getting the same or MORE cost per head cover."

The backlash — and some regrets — continued on Twitter:

▶ **@KSbraga** *(Sbraga chef Kevin Sbraga)* 4 courses for $45 or 3 courses for $35? Want a break from restaurant week? Dine @SBRAGA_dining for a great meal and value everyday.

▶ **@marcvetri** @KSbraga glad you're not doing restaurant week brother...it's such a scam. Too bad people don't realize it.

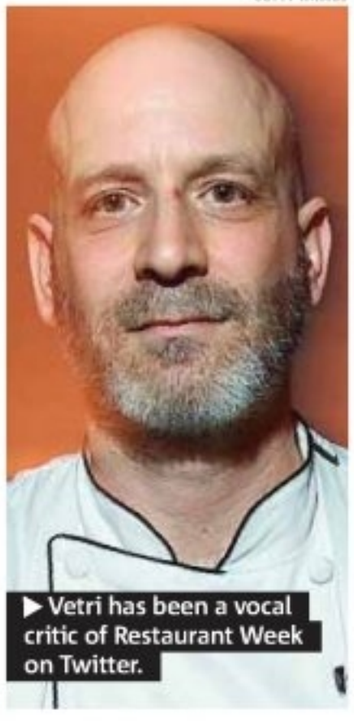
▶ **@marcvetri** I think @foobooz should print a "not participating in RW guide". That way people looking to eat a good meal can go eat somewhere.

▶ **@BrauhausSchmitz** Who cares about restaurant week? You can get 3 courses for $35 every week at Brauhaus...

▶ **@BrauhausSchmitz** Alright restaurant week, you win.I guess we need to join next year. It is crickets in here. Actually, we wish there were at least crickets.

▶ **@MemeRestaurant** Meme not doing restaurant week. But you should try it anyway and you can order anything you want for the same money...what a deal!

GETTY IMAGES



▶ Vetri has been a vocal critic of Restaurant Week on Twitter.

Center City District: The numbers speak for themselves

As for big-name chefs such as Marc Vetri declining to participate, Michelle Shannon, vice president of marketing and communications at CCD, isn't worried.

Heavyweights Stephen Starr and Jose Garces are regulars, and business is good. "Every time we do Restaurant Week, I have people calling begging to be in it who are out of the district," she says.

"I think the numbers really speak for themselves. Last year was our most successful one ever: 69 percent of the restaurants saw an increase in sales. Somebody's always going to be on the fringe of whatever boundary we create. Our mission is to make money for the property owners within our district — it's not in our mission to promote everything in Philadelphia."

69 Percent of participating Restaurant Week venues saw an increase in sales, Shannon said

myentertainment

2

THE WORD

Metro's **Monica Weymouth** shares her take on the world of gossip @monicaatmetro monica.weymouth@metro.us

– Dorothy Robinson will return Feb. 7.

The feed ...

▶ Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Today, Mindy Kaling has pretty strong opinions, Judd Apatow made a faux pas, MC Hammer is experiencing technical difficulties and Joan Rivers can't pass up an opportunity for a joke.

@mindykaling: A League of Their Own is the best movie ever made.

@JuddApatow: I gave my valet parking ticket to a man who was not the valet yesterday. It effected my sleep.

@MCHammer: My Apologies to all my friends getting text from "that App" .. Took over my phone book and spammed the world !!!!

@Joan_Rivers: Demi Moore's health seems to be improving! An hour after being rushed to the hospital she was already cruising the pediatric ward for dates.

Kaling

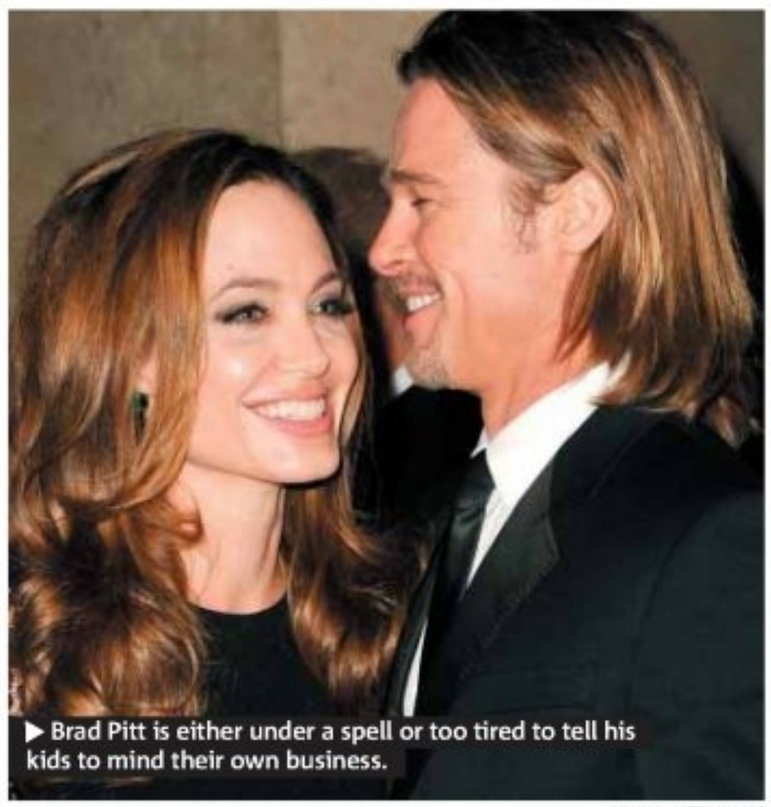
Put a ring on it, Brad

After almost seven years together, it looks like **Brad Pitt** and **Angelina Jolie** might make it official. The royal couple is abandoning their original plan to wait until gay marriage is legal in exchange for some peace and quiet around the house. "We're getting a lot of pressure from the kids," Pitt admits in an interview with "CBS Sunday Morning" that aired yesterday. "It means something to them."

It seems their six-pack — count 'em: **Maddox**, **Pax**, **Zahara**, **Shiloh**, **Knox** and **Vivienne** — have been telling him to "get Mommy a ring" and he's promised, "OK, I will! I will!"

So, just to sum it up: When pressured by six young children to buy a diamond for a woman who has let him stick around since 2005 without one, Brad Pitt runs his strong, rugged hands through his shiny blonde hair and says, "Sure kids, why not."

Angelina, we don't know what you did to this man, but we're impressed.



▶ Brad Pitt is either under a spell or too tired to tell his kids to mind their own business.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

JLo and Marc Anthony to reconcile?

After the space we devoted to their breakup, they'd better not. In an interview with People.com about their new Spanish-language talent search show, "Q'Viva: The Chosen," **Anthony** shares some pretty benign "we'll always love and respect each other" PR speak: "We're just meant to be in each other's lives on different levels. This is a long story, it's not a short story. Marriage was just one chapter."

But sources tell TMZ that a reconciliation is possible, and that the couple has been strengthened by splitting up.

Just as we suspected: These two are fueled by publicity and gossip columnist tears. **JLo**, you announce a vow renewal past deadline, and so help us we will cut off your supply.

▶ Moore

Whip-its redacted

References to whip-its were redacted from Demi Moore's 911 tape after the L.A. city attorney recommended the move to protect her privacy, reports TMZ. The tape was released to the public on Friday. Her friends had told paramedics that she had inhaled nitrous oxide and was "semiconscious, barely."

We've got to wonder: Is this a policy for all drugs, or just the small handful that are more embarrassing than cough syrup?

Talking points

Ashton concerned for Moore

Ashton Kutcher returned to Los Angeles this weekend after work engagements — including modeling for clothing brand Colcci — kept him in Brazil during estranged wife **Demi Moore**'s drug-related hospitalization. "Ashton is deeply concerned for Demi," a source says, according to Hollyscoop. "He still cares about her and wants the best for her. But their marriage is ending and they are both moving on with their lives."

Weekend date for Taylor Lautner

▶ Taylor Lautner and Sara Hicks

"Twilight" star **Taylor Lautner** treated ex-girlfriend **Sara Hicks**, whom he'd dated in high school, to a performance of Cirque du Soleil's new show in Santa Monica, Calif., over the weekend, according to Us Weekly. As for Hicks, who is now a cheerleader for the L.A. Clippers, she and Lautner "have been hanging out a lot in L.A., seeing a few shows and going to dinner," according to a source.

Russell Brand talks Katy Perry

Russell Brand hasn't been wasting any time. Less than a month after filing from divorce from **Katy Perry**, he is reportedly already seeing multiple women — and badmouthing his soon-to-be ex-wife to them, according to Us Weekly. "He's spoken terribly about Katy to them," one source says, adding that Brand is particularly interested in one of the new women. "He told her he wanted her to move in with him."

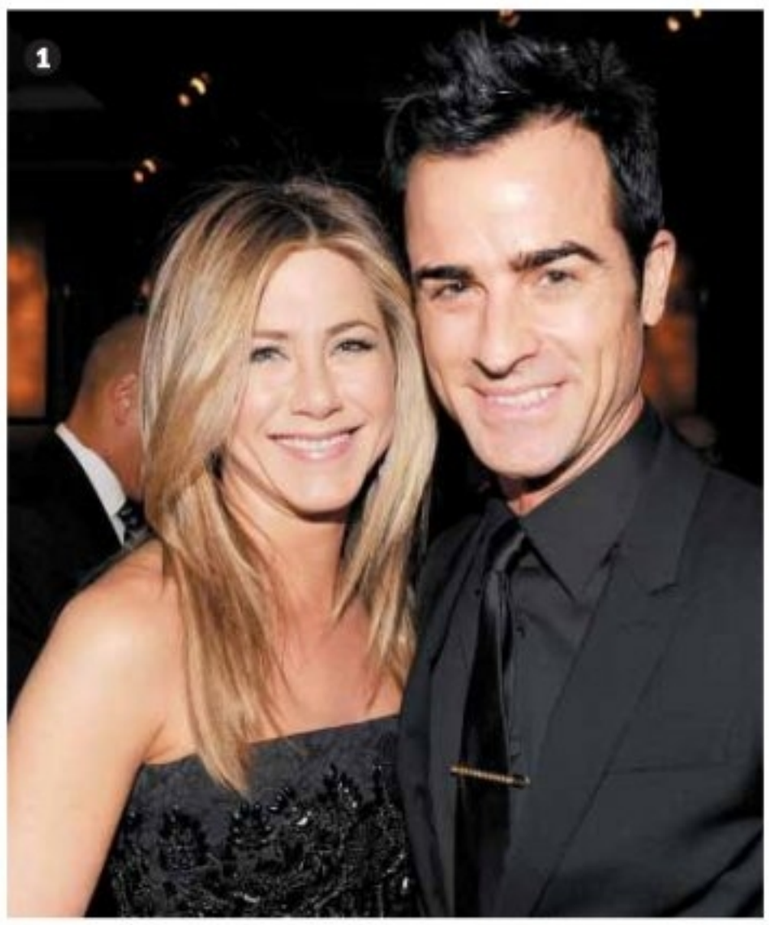
Seal and Klum are not done yet

While **Seal** and **Heidi Klum** are separated — and divorce rumors are swirling — the British singer is looking to forestall such talk. "We're not getting divorced," he tells Access Hollywood's **Billy Bush**. "We're not even legally separated. We are separated. The reality of the situation is we have grown apart." That being said, Seal's positive spin can only go so far. "Is there a chance of us getting back together?" he says. "Honestly, Billy, I don't know."

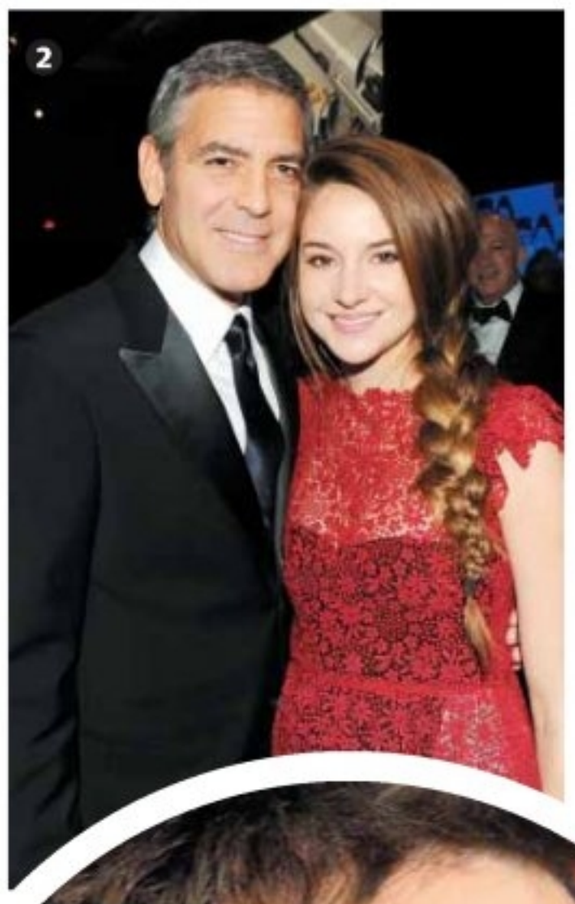
▶ Brand

▶ Seal

Weekend star gazing

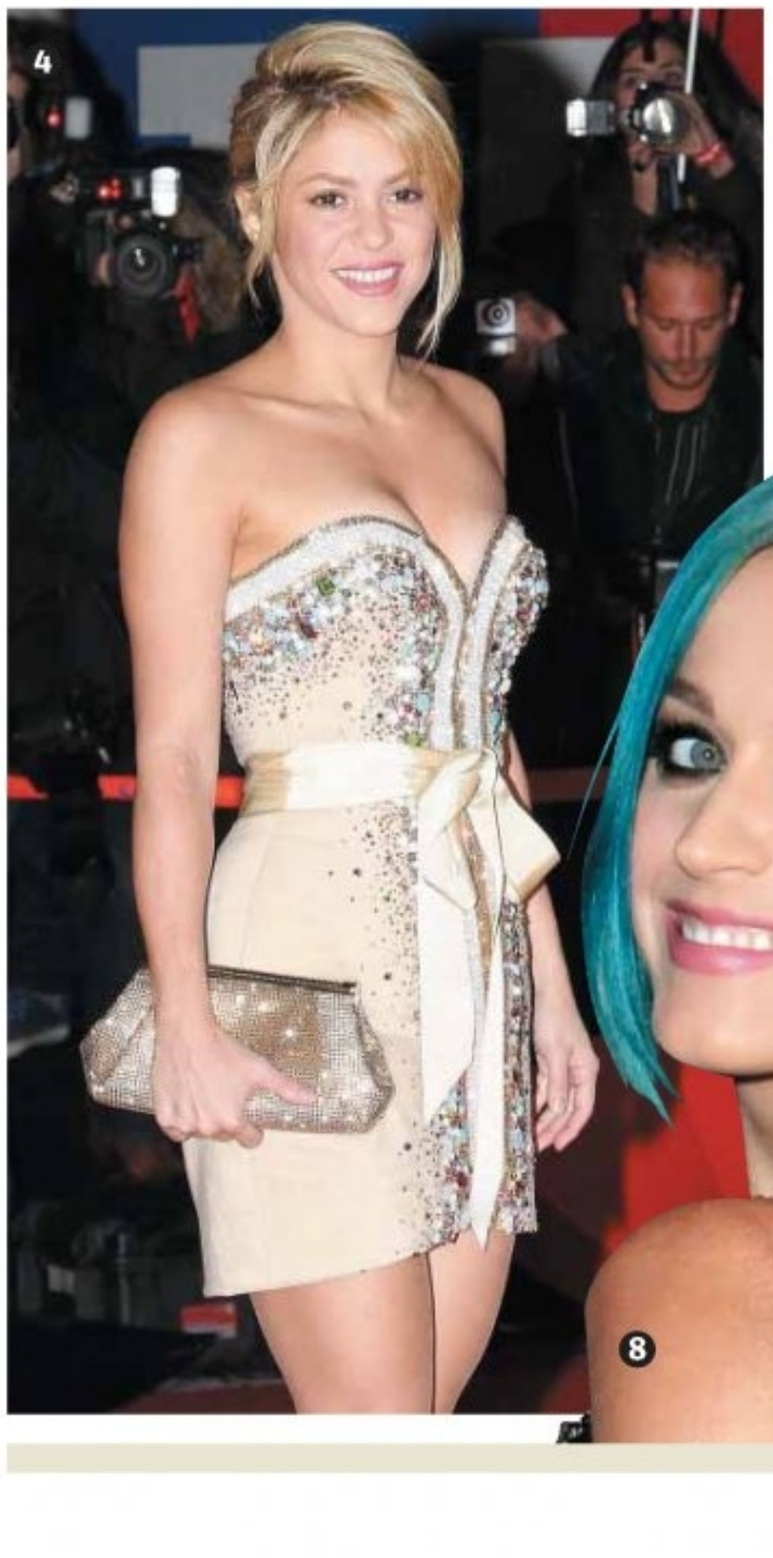


1. Jennifer Aniston and boyfriend (or, depending what you read, top-secret alien husband and soon-to-be-father of her quintuplets) Justin Theroux were spotted at the Directors Guild Of America Awards in Hollywood on Saturday.



2. George Clooney and his "Descendants" co-star Shailene Woodley pose at a Directors Guild party.

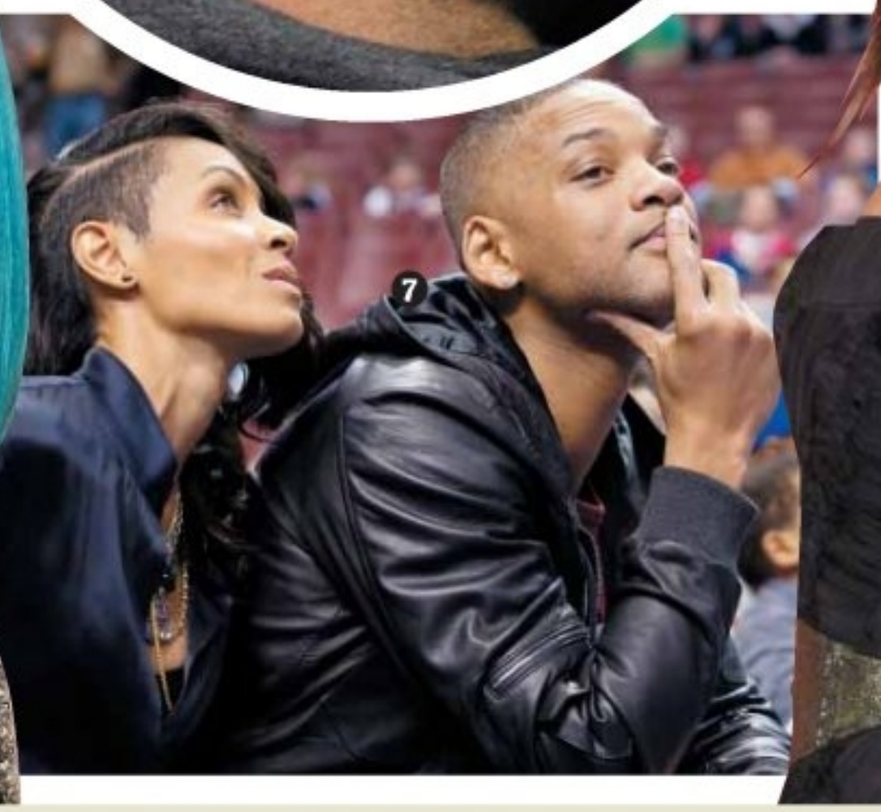
3. It's official: Justin Bieber has entered That Awkward Phase. He was at the NRJ Music Awards 2012 in Cannes, France, on Saturday.



4. In much less awkward NRJ red carpet news: Shakira.

5. Zoe Saldana attended "The Words" premiere at the Sundance Film Festival on Saturday.

6. Also on hand at "The Worlds" premiere: actor Bradley Cooper.



7. Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith were in town Friday for the 76ers vs. Charlotte Bobcats game.

8. Katy Perry rocked a blue 'do in Vegas on Saturday.

1, 3: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES
2: MARC PIASECKI /GETTY IMAGES
4: PASCAL LE SEGRETAIN/GETTY IMAGES
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New threats in Harlan

One villain won't do on 'Justified' this season Meet the men who will be keeping Raylan Givens on his toes

PRASHANT GUPTA/FX

▶ Neal McDonough, left, stars as Detroit gangster Quarles on "Justified," airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m. on FX.

There's no shortage of bad guys causing trouble for Deputy U.S. Marshal Raylan Givens in the Southern underbelly where FX drama "Justified" exists. But finding one to match the grit and cunning of Mags Bennett — portrayed with Emmy-winning flair by Margo Martindale last season — was no easy task. So, two men will go toe to toe with the modern-day gunslinger this year: Quarles (Neal McDonough), a Detroit gangster with his sights set on becoming a Kentucky crime lord, and Limehouse (Mykelti Williamson), a Harlan County man who has no scruples when it comes to protecting his holler.

"We wanted to ... try a different kind of antagonist this year," says "Justified" creator Graham Yost of the impeccably tailored, ruthless Quarles. "We thought it would be interesting to bring in a guy from the outside who thinks he's going to come down to Kentucky and show these backwoods hicks how crime is really done. We'll just see how that goes for him."

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Quarles may have a hard time adjusting to his new surroundings, but it didn't take McDonough and Williamson long to acclimate to the "Justified" set. Well, not once they got over their jitters, at least.

"The first time I showed up on the set I was extremely nervous, because I'm a fan of the show and the last thing I wanted to do was destroy something that I just love," Williamson says. McDonough took a different approach: "[I] purposefully didn't want to watch what [Martindale] did last year, or what everyone else was doing, because I didn't want to get nervous," he says. "Then I sat down last week and I watched the show. Now I'm nervous."

No regrets

Creator Yost stands behind the decision to (SPOILER ALERT!) kill off baddie Mags Bennett in Season 2's finale. "We can't just accumulate bad guys over the years and have them all sitting around in a room like, you know, teachers on probation in New York," he jokes.

"I don't regret that we killed Mags; I do regret not having [actress Margo Martindale] around," he says.

AMBER RAY
amber.ray@metro.us

The 'Super Bowl' of dramas

"Justified" newbies Neal McDonough and Mykelti Williamson can't stop gushing about their experience working on the critically acclaimed series. Williamson likens the creativity and talent of the cast to "the greatest group of jazz musicians playing together," while McDonough said going to work on the drama was "like Super Bowl Sunday every time you get to the set."

Why so much praise? McDonough credits star/producer Timothy Olyphant's dedication — and sense of perfectionism — to the success of the show.

"Tim's amazing. ... If the scene isn't working correctly, we'll take our time," McDonough explains. "We'll make it work perfectly. Not a lot of guys who are, you know, No. 1 on the call sheet, care that much about a show to make each scene as perfect as possible. Tim's going to hang out and make sure the show is top-notch."

TV watch list

'Gossip Girl'

DRAMA. Blair finally marries Prince Louis — or does she? — in the series' 100th episode. But more shocking, perhaps, than even a potential runaway bride is the revelation of Gossip Girl's identity tonight.
8 p.m., The CW

GIOVANNI RUFINO/THE CW
▶ "Gossip Girl"

'Real Housewives of Beverly Hills Reunion, Part 1'

REALITY. The ladies reflect on how badly they behaved this season — which will require three full installments of this reunion special, refereed by Andy Cohen.
9 p.m., Bravo

'RuPaul's Drag Race'

REALITY. Thirteen of the fiercest dudes who look like ladies compete for the title of top drag queen in this over-the-top, too-funny-to-miss reality competition.
Season premiere, 9 p.m., Logo
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Box office

▶ You just won the box office, Liam. Don't look so sad!

'The Grey' wins weekend box office

Survival story "The Grey," starring Liam Neeson, topped the weekend movie box office charts with an estimated $20 million in U.S. and Canadian total ticket sales, according to studio estimates released on Sunday.

"The Grey" knocked last weekend's winner, "Underworld: Awakening," to second place. The vampire and werewolf sequel starring Kate Beckinsale brought in $12.5 million from Friday through Sunday.

New Katherine Heigl comedy "One for the Money" finished third with $11.8 million. REUTERS

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Dave Burrell's long-awaited duet

Tonight's Ars Nova Workshop pairs the Philly jazz pianist up with Dutch drummer Han Bennink

Dave Burrell clearly remembers when there was a different energy in the Philly jazz scene.

"We're not at an all-time high compared to the booming days, and I wish the enthusiasm of younger, newer players would keep on happening for all of us players," says the legendary pianist and Philadelphian.

Despite the lull, Burrell is himself still bent on keeping the sound alive. Tonight, he will be gracing the Philadelphia Art Alliance's stage with Dutch drummer Han Bennink in the pair's first ever duo performance through the Ars Nova Workshop.

If you go

Dave Burrell and Han Bennink
Tonight, 8
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www.arsnovaworkshop.org

Burrell has collaborated extensively with other American jazz powerhouses (Archie Shepp, David Murray) over the course of his influential career. Bennink, buzzing in from across the Atlantic, is, in Burrell's words, "one of the giants of the European jazz scene."

Both musicians have long anticipated the collaboration. Burrell "always wanted to do something with [Bennink] that was documented properly, in the proper context." In fact, since Burrell's decades-ago European tour, the pair has played a game of transcontinental tag, chasing but never quite scoring a musical partnership — until now, that is.

What to anticipate from the collaboration? "Clarity," Burrell says. "Any direction Han proposes, I will follow with clarity; the same goes for when I initiate a musical sentence."

TIFFANY KANG
letters@metro.us

▶ What's playing on Burrell's iPod? "All of the hip-hop joints — artists like Jacob Latimore and Red Cafe."

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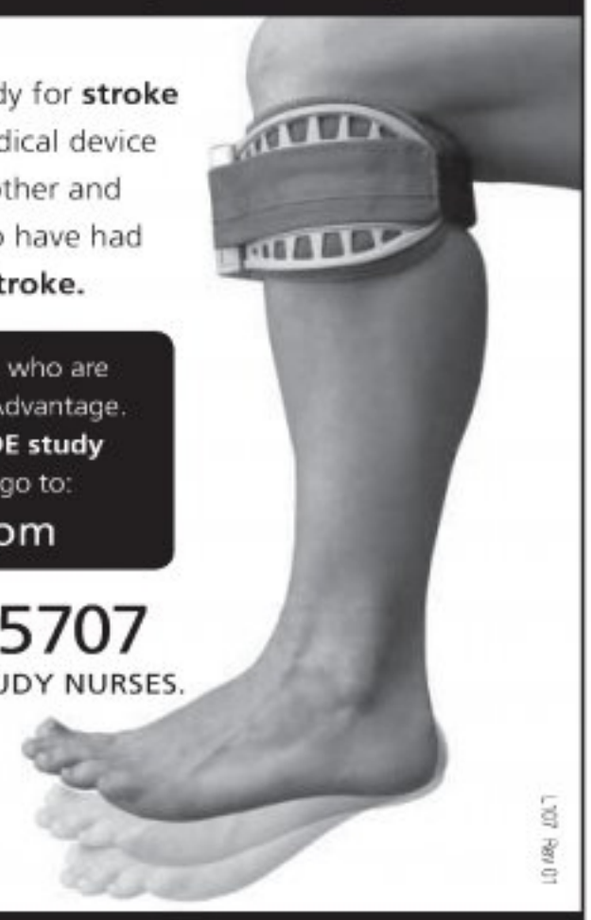

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Why you need to meditate

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Forget what you think you know about meditation: You don't need to sit cross-legged, you don't need to light candles and you definitely don't need to be a Buddhist monk. All you need, according to Jeff Cannon, author of "The Simple Truth: Meditation for the Modern World," is a willingness to quiet your brain for a few moments.

"Most people think of meditation as having to sit for half an hour, or going away on a weekend retreat," he says. "It's really just a focus of the mind. You can meditate walking. You can meditate standing. Scientists have found that with as little as 15 minutes a day, your brain actually starts remapping itself. To meditate for a couple of minutes gives you stability."

And it's not just good for improving your mental health: Your physical wellbeing benefits from meditation, too.

Cannon's guide to meditation

- If you're sitting, move to the edge of your chair and make your back straight. Or, stand up straight.
- Close your eyes and breathe in through your nose, into your stomach and hold it there for a couple of counts. Then breathe back out.
- Slowly breathe in for a count of eight and then hold it for a count of two, then breathe back out for a count of eight. Place your attention on your breath, either on the tip of your nose, at the feel of your stomach as it moves or at the travel of air coming through your throat, into your lungs and then back out.
- Repeat the process.

"There are almost endless studies right now on lower blood pressure, ability to control anxiety. They're using it for people with ADD, cancer patients — they're using it for pretty much anything that stress can negatively affect. More and more in the medical community are finding that it's an important part of healing [and] recovery. After a 10-hour brain surgery I was out of the hospital in about three days, and the doctors were stunned because I wasn't taking any pain medication — I was going back to meditating."

Indeed, Cannon's interest in meditation reached its height while he recuperated from a 10-hour surgery that removed six tumors from his brain.

"In the six months I had to seriously recover, I not only watched my brain slowly reboot itself, but I started reading more and more about neuroplasticity. [Scientists] used to think the brain was just a static organ, it didn't change. But what they started learning was the brain actually remaps itself all the time. I started exploring more and more to say, 'Well, if the brain can change, then why can't we change the brain?'"

DIGITAL VISION

▶ Meditation can help you find some calm during your morning commute.

Cannon swears that if you pick up the habit, you'll see results "within the first week."

"Instead of making rash decisions or responding to issues by habit, you all of a sudden start pausing your life."

MEREDITH ENGEL
meredith.engel@metro.us

Distractions will happen: It's OK

"Your mind is there to be distracted. Just acknowledge that you have a thought. You can tell yourself, 'Not now, this is my time to meditate,' and come back to focusing on your breath. This morning I was meditating and you could hear a fire engine go by. You just acknowledge, 'That's a fire engine, OK, that doesn't bother me right now.'"

Reader love notes

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Making the most of eight hours

You can get a lot more done than you think in a workday ◗ Productivity expert Jason W. Womack on how to 'Work Smarter, Think Bigger, Make More'

Productivity expert Jason W. Womack travels the country with his patented training seminars and executive coaching program. His latest book, "Your Best Just Got Better: Work Smarter, Think Bigger, Make More," includes advice on identifying your own individual ways of learning and maximizing 15-minute blocks of time during the workday.

On your blog you seem to be micro-managing almost every moment of your day. Does that ever cause anxiety?

I have been accused of being a little overproductive. For me, it's about creating a lifestyle where, if I get more done in shorter amounts of time, I open up windows of time to do anything I want.

What's the simplest thing an office worker can change to enhance productivity?

Adjust the way they manage their e-mail. There are three kinds of e-mail: stuff they have to think about later, stuff that they're managing over time and then there are some that are an action they have to take. Most people flag certain e-mail or forward it to themselves to kick it back to the top. But when you send them back to yourself, change the subject lines of your action e-mails to verbs: "Call," "Review," "Print." Then suddenly your inbox becomes a to-do list, not just this random clutter of communication.

"It's about creating a lifestyle where, if I get more done in shorter amounts of time, I open up windows of time to do anything I want."
WOMACK

What's something a person can do today to make a positive change in his or her career?

Subscribe to five magazines about something you want to learn about. Buy five books about that same topic, and sign up for five days of conferences. You're going to get 60 issues of ideas about whatever it is you're stepping into. The books will let you dive deep into the subject matter, and the conferences will create a social connection with what you're growing toward. Those three things could set your year up for real growth.

BRUCE WALSH
bruce.walsh@metro.us

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▶ What can you knock out in a week? Jason W. Womack's insane levels of productivity can be followed on his blog: www.jasonwomackblog.com.

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How to stay healthy at the office

It's difficult to stick to your fitness goals when you're in the middle of a stressful day
But there are ways to follow through with your plan — even when the doughnuts come out

Remember one month ago when you were going to get in shape, eat better and quit smoking in 2012? Too often, work becomes a place of limbo for those goals.

Fitness guru Mark Allen, co-author of "Fit Soul, Fit Body: 9 Keys to a Healthier, Happier You," stresses the importance of setting realistic goals for your schedule — and then taking time to reflect on those goals throughout the work day. "Sometimes the reason we get discouraged is because we allow our mood to influence our actions," he says. "Maybe you've had a bad day and tell yourself it's pointless to work out, or you convince yourself it's too hard. Instead, set aside a quiet time to reflect on your goals."

If the constant barrage of sugary snacks in the break room is beating down your diet willpower, Allen suggests you get back on track by writing yourself a contract that you can stick to. Keep it simple, clear and attainable, such as: "By my June 1 doctor's appointment, I aim to have lowered my cholesterol by 10 points and lost 10 pounds."

The buddy exercise system can be valuable in the office, not just at the gym. Jill Spiegel, author of "How to Talk to Anyone About Anything! The Secrets to Connecting," believes in finding a "walk partner" at work. "Next time you're chatting in the break room or talking in the lobby, positively share your [health] goals with your co-workers," says Spiegel. "Energy is contagious."

JULIA WEST
letters@metro.us

Work & weight

What's holding you back? In a survey by CareerBuilder, the majority of workers identified being stationary at a desk as the main culprit. But that wasn't the only problem:

- **Sitting at a desk:** 36 percent
- **Eating out:** 16 percent
- **Skipping meals:** 13 percent
- **Workplace parties:** 12 percent

COMSTOCK

▶ The office kitchen: Beware, all ye who enter here.

Quick fit tips

Looking to get a little exercise in at work? Laurie Kendall-Ellis, executive director of the American Physical Therapy Association, gave us these tips for boosting energy at work.

1 Park the car farther away. Alternate swinging your arms as you walk at a brisk pace. This will increase your heart rate and the value of the walk.

2 While at your desk, squeeze your shoulder blades back and down while taking a deep breath in. Look straight ahead as you do this. It's a chance to move out of the head-down posture that so many of us assume with texting and computer work.

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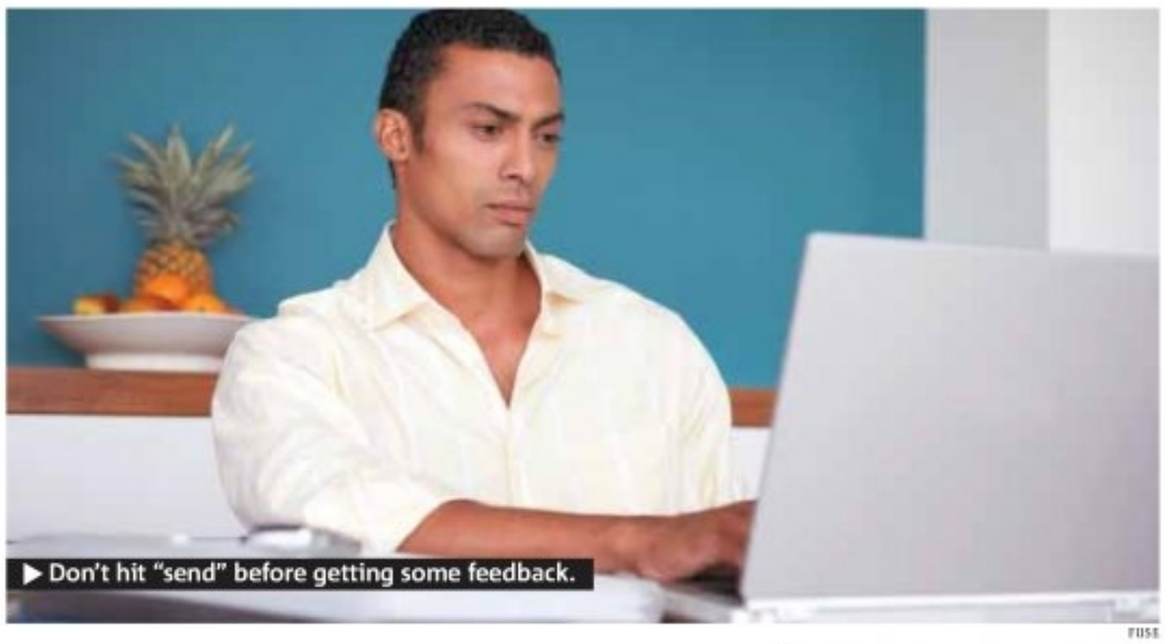
Writing cover letters in the age of e-mail

The good news: You don't have to worry about picking out fancy paper anymore But the e-mailed cover letter presents its own set of problems


Don't hit "send" before getting some feedback.

PHOTOS.COM

The cover e-mail — rather than cover letter — inspires fierce disagreements between career experts. Depending on the field, striking the right tone can be a philosophical quandary. How formal should this piece of writing be? Should the tone be closer to the cover letters of yore — or is a friendlier, casual spirit inherent to online communication?

Pamela Skillings teaches a writing workshop for the American Management Association: "Seven Critical Web Writing Mistakes and How to Avoid Them." She founded Skillful Communications in 2005, a New York-based company specializing in job interview coaching.

How can applicants use the subject line to their advantage?
It's an opportunity to cut through the clutter. Inserting a key word from the job description is a good strategy. You can also separate yourself from the crowd by inserting a targeted phrase about your skills.

Is there a way to make your e-mail more visually appealing?
Yes. Don't write big block paragraphs. People can't read big blocks of text on their screen. Use white space. Each idea should have its own paragraph.

When replying to Craigslist, Monster and other sites, how do you know if your e-mails are effective?
It's really difficult to judge that based on responses from employers. When it comes to sites like that, employers are getting so many responses. It may not be a reflection of your writing style. More likely, it's a reflection of the deluge they're receiving. The better way to know if your writing is effective is to get some feedback from someone you know and respect. A question to ask is, "if you didn't know me, and you received this, what would you think?" Most people don't even proofread, let alone ask for feedback, so that can make your e-mail stand out.

BRUCE WALSH
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Letters

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Romney mistaken on our blind trust

Would Romney have a blind trust run the White House, too? That is the lamest excuse I have ever heard. This guy wants you to elect him the leader of the free world, and he had the nerve to stand there with his hands in the air claiming ignorance, saying he has no idea what his investments are. Some leader. He can't even run himself. I think he's mistaken if he expects Americans to simply give him their "blind trust."
MICHAEL CHIMENTI, VIA E-MAIL

Liberal baggage carries more weight

Notice how the press loves to use the term "baggage" when assessing the viability of conservative candidates? I suggest we citizens apply the same terminology to the progressive, socialist, liberal representatives in Congress and the Senate. Their baggage is corruption on a massive scale combined with thievery, insider trading and a "greed is good" attitude. They rail against big corporations and small business owners while they steal our futures through taxation and regulation, anti-American actions and subservience to a communist ideology that seeks to control every aspect of our lives.
JOHN SANGENARIO, VIA E-MAIL

Re-elect Obama — for conservatism!

Maybe it would be best to have Barack Obama re-elected — for the conservative movement, that is! We citizens need to stop voting for liberals posing as conservatives. **FRANK ST. GEORGE, VIA E-MAIL**

E-mail your letters: **letters@metro.us**

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words.
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Please include your name and contact information.

"Over the last decade, the Pentagon budget has grown by 100 percent."

At a time when budgets are tight and programs and services in our community are being cut back, the Pentagon budget keeps getting bigger. The Secretary of Defense announced plans to slow the rate of growth for the Pentagon budget, but even under this proposal in 10 years the Pentagon budget would still be bigger than it is today. Over the last decade, the Pentagon budget has grown by 100 percent. Right now, we are all having to cut back. The Pentagon should have to as well. **NANCY HATFIELD, VIA E-MAIL**

Horoscope

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** It's erroneous to believe, as others say, that a very important arrangement is slipping from your control.
♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** You're presently in a very good cycle for fulfilling your desires and expectations, but good things can only happen if you believe in yourself.
♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** Although initially you might not believe it, the odds are slanted in your favor. Even if you're delayed for a while, you'll take full advantage of the lull.
♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** Your powers of observation are extremely astute, so carefully observe a role model handle a situation similar to one you must take care of.
♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** For whatever reason, your dealings with male pals will be easier to handle than those with the ladies.
♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** The proof you've been looking for regarding the loyalty and/or support of your associates will be made clear to you.
♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** Any sincere effort you put forth to protect a critical matter for another will work well, and it will also let others know that they had better not bother you.
♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Someone who is in a position of power is apt to sense a kinship with you. She or he is likely to do something to help you without being asked.
♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** Normally it isn't too smart to have too many irons in the fire simultaneously, but your case may be an exception.
♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** It won't be because you'll be more forceful or assertive than usual that you'll have a greater impact on others.
♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Don't be indifferent about situations that are running smoothly and producing good results for you.
♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** Your ability to evaluate and utilize information so well is likely to be the envy of all your associates.
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Across
1 Widespread destruction
6 Envelope abbr.
10 Enjoy a hot tub
14 Mover's rental (hyph.)
15 Ta-ta in Turin
16 Far East cuisine
17 Three bears' visitor
19 Tarzan's title
20 Storm center
21 Telegraph code
22 Evita or Juan
23 "Bird on a Wire" actress
24 Ages, as cheese
25 Goat noises
28 Term paper abbr. (2 wds.)
30 Film
31 Transit user
35 Hang on
36 Eagle's nest
37 Moon -- Zappa
39 Beach sandal (hyph.)
41 Correspond
42 WWW addresses
43 Fluttered, as lashes
44 Arms position
48 Duffers' goals
49 Guys
50 Danger signal
52 Fresh
55 Valhalla host
56 Supernova remnant(2 wds.)
58 Hecklers' chorus
59 Gas or tel.
60 Khartoum's land
61 Is, in Segovia
62 Rookie
63 Gallup finding

Down
1 Mammoth
2 Popeye's hi
3 Bye, to Gaius
4 Belly dance instrument
5 Prevailing mood
6 Type of squash
7 Tiny spasms
8 -- a hike!
9 Negatives
10 Expensive
11 Midwest airport
12 Composer -- Copland
13 Potters' ovens
18 Stock market figures
22 Heap
23 Part of Hispaniola
24 Rhapsodize
25 Luxury car
26 Sit around
27 Malicious
28 Italian money
29 Stumble
31 Offer for money
32 Round dwellings
33 I'll get right -- --!
34 Ceremony
36 Certain hairdo
38 Mr. Turner
40 Dartboard locales
41 Most summery
43 Silo companion
44 Hacienda brick
45 Accolades
46 -- box
47 Brainy club
48 Picasso's name
50 Dilettantish
51 Cougar's pad
52 Renoir subject
53 Vivacity
54 Fairy godmother's need
56 Slice
57 Prickly husk (var.)

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4				2				3
	8	3	4	1				

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

8			6		9			1
		7						
9	5			2	1			
5		9	1					
3		6	9		5	1		8
					2	7		9
			5	9			6	3
						2		
4			2		6			7

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to weekend's crossword

G	R	A	S	S	Y	■	O	R	B	■	C	A	M	O
P	O	T	A	T	O	■	F	E	E	■	A	L	O	U
S	I	M	M	E	R	■	F	A	A	■	P	L	U	S
■	■	B	R	E	W	E	R	S	Y	E	A	S	T	■
W	O	M	A	N	■	E	R	S	■	E	R	N	E	S
I	R	A	S	■	D	D	S	■	M	A	E	■	■	■
E	T	C	■	R	I	G	■	B	I	R	D	D	O	G
S	H	H	■	E	V	E	■	E	L	L	■	R	H	O
T	O	U	C	H	E	D	■	L	A	Y	■	E	A	T
■	■	H	A	D	■	N	U	N	■	B	A	R	B	■
S	A	H	I	B	■	F	O	G	■	H	O	M	E	Y
T	R	A	N	S	Y	L	V	A	N	I	A	■	■	■
R	O	V	E	■	V	I	E	■	E	N	T	A	I	L
A	M	E	S	■	E	E	L	■	A	G	E	N	D	A
D	A	N	E	■	S	R	S	■	R	E	D	T	A	G

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SAME NAGGING ISSUES

Flyers facing some questions as always Team still struggling to find stability in net and on blue line

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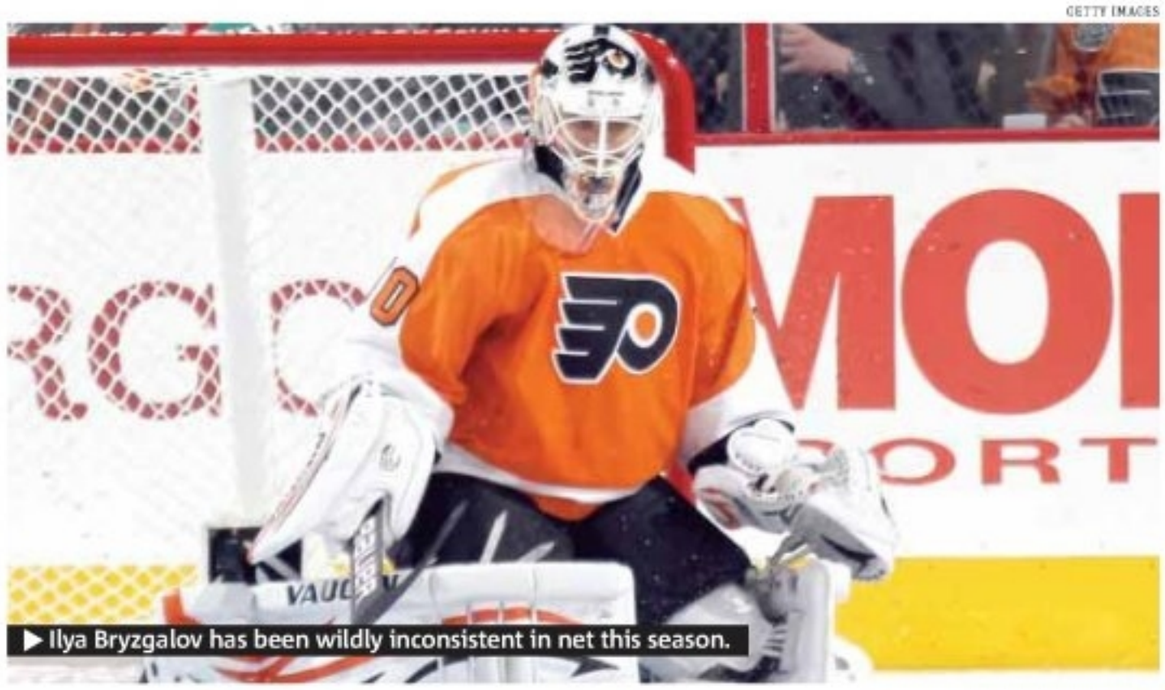

▶ Ilya Bryzgalov has been wildly inconsistent in net this season.

Two months and 34 games.

By then, Flyers fans can only hope their team has the answer to some nagging questions — if they hope to make a serious Stanley Cup run.

Unfortunately, this year's questions are the same ones that have nagged them the last few seasons.

Who's between the pipes? Who's back on the blue line to keep players from getting too comfortable in front of the net? And who's going to be healthy enough to answer the call?

With the second half of the season getting under way tomorrow night, how that plays out between now and April could determine what ultimately happens in May and perhaps June.

Presumably during that span Peter Laviolette will figure out if he can trust eccentric Ilya Bryzgalov to stop pucks as well as he delivers one-liners over vastly improved Sergei Bobrovsky. He'll also know if his Chris Pronger-less defense gets some needed reinforcements by the late February trading deadline or if he'll have to force-feed rookies Marc-Andre Bourdon and Eric Gustafsson in the postseason.

Finally, will the string of concussions that have most recently sidelined James van Riemsdyk and Danny Briere, not to mention putting Pronger's career at jeopardy, continue to haunt them?

With all those uncertainties, Laviolette has to be secretly thrilled to find his club with 63 points at the break, the No. 4 seed in the East but just three points off the Rangers pace in the Atlantic.

Quoted

"Stop worrying about me. Too much thinking about me in the media ... Leave me alone guys. Leave me be and let me play hockey."

ILYA BRYZGALOV, TALKING TO REPORTERS LAST WEEK

Three questions at the break

1 What about Bryz?
Ilya Bryzgalov may prove his $51 million worth. It's just appearing more and more likely it won't be this year. Bryzgalov has been inconsistent from the start, repeatedly vulnerable on deflections and sharp angle shots. In contrast, Sergei Bobrovsky has been solid all season.

2 Help on the way?
Chris Pronger's absence, particularly his physical, borderline dirty style of clearing players away from the net, has had a trickle down effect, with them giving up nearly a goal a game more since he's been out. GM Paul Holmgren will do his best to bring in somebody.

3 How about the kids?
With eight rookies in the lineup it would be only natural to expect them to start acting their age when the games get bigger. But that theory doesn't seem to fly here. Matt Read, Sean Couturier, Brayden Schenn and Zac Rinaldo seem oblivious to the idea they're supposed to be scared. In fact, they look better and better with each game.

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Plank provides leadership after disappointing season

Soul's new coach learned from Ryan, Hayes, Ditka Looking to restore 2008 ArenaBowl champions to glory Has more wins in first four years than any other coach in AFL history

Disappointment.

That's how fans in Philadelphia will remember the 2011 football seasons of both the Eagles and Soul.

The Eagles, of course, missed the playoffs after lofty expectations. And the Soul, following a two-year hiatus from the Arena Football League, were dead last in the league's Eastern Division, with a 6-12 record. In 2008, the Soul won the ArenaBowl and hoisted the league's championship trophy.

The disappointing finish cost head coach Mike Hohensee his job after just one season. Looking to instill a winning attitude, the Soul tapped former Chicago Bears safety Doug Plank.

Plank is a disciple and favorite of former Bears defensive coordinator and Eagles coach Buddy Ryan. Ryan named the famed "46 Defense" after Plank's jersey number, since he was noted for his hard-hitting and aggressive style.

"I am very close to Buddy, in terms from a personal and professional standpoint," said Plank, a two-time AFL Coach of the Year (2005, 2007). "I know what he did here, when he came here as a head coach, the attitude he brought."

Plank has posted more victories (47) in his first four years than any other coach in AFL history. The 58-year-old Plank intends to bring the Soul the same leadership qualities that he learned while playing under legendary coaches like Ryan, Woody Hayes and Mike Ditka.

"Buddy was unique at developing team concepts. We are all in this together, don't let each other down, we are only as strong as the weakest link," Plank said, "When you talk about Coach Ditka, I think his biggest tool was his communication skills ... how he talked to the team, how he challenged the team, how he let them know that he expected them to succeed."

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Plank is a two-time AFL Coach of the Year winner.

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Soul, others team up to fight child sex abuse

Stand up for a good cause.

The Soul, along with local radio stations and the Philadelphia Children's Alliance, are launching "STAND UP Radio Rally" today, a one-day awareness campaign created in response to recent headlines involving child sex abuse, like the Jerry Sandusky scandal.

"Our organizations are joining together to ask people to stand up and take a pledge to report abuse," said Soul co-owner Ron Jaworski.

The Soul open the 2012 season March 18 in New Orleans. The team's home opener is slated for April 1 versus Cleveland. The Soul will donate $15 from each $28 ticket sold to Philadelphia Children's Alliance. METRO

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At 10 am at 2515 S. Front St., Phila., PA 19148

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At 10 am at 7049 Frankford Ave., Phila., PA 19135

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At 10 am at 5440 North 6th Street, Phila., PA 19120

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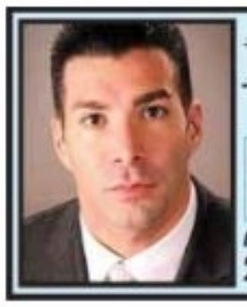

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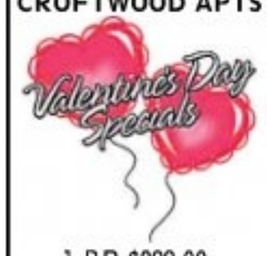

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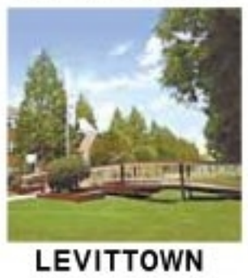

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mymotoring

Auto Show in photos

Philadelphia Auto Show

1. Show-goers marveled at the suicide doors winging out from this Lamborghini.
2. Jamie Owens showed off the 2012 Chevrolet Corvette ZR1, one of the fastest model cars.
3. The 1931 Ford Model AA tow truck used to respond to roadside emergencies in AAA's early days.
4. Solar-powered cars seemed popular among visitors.
5. Young visitors enjoyed taking this canary yellow 2012 Chevrolet Camaro SS for a test-sit. RIKARD LARMA

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In accordance with the Self Storage Lien Law of Pennsylvania 73 P.S. 1901-1917 and to satisfy an operator's lien, the personal property contained in the following units will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder for cash on Saturday, February 11, 2012, at 12:00 p.m. at Self Service Storage 2000 Hamilton St., Philadelphia, PA. 19130, (215)569-0732.
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1401 Gary, Henrietta
1405 Herron, Katherine
1901 Lisi, Ross
1012 Souder, James
1505 Wascow, Joseph
2237 Cartegena, Christopher
2250 Ettenberg, Sam
2212 Lerner, Jeff
2702 Ragsdale, Cheryl
2184 Reineke, David Jr.
2146 Rosen, Samuel
2711 Schrader, Rosemarie
2842 Schrader, Rosemarie
2211 Wiley, Jacqueline
3020 Fulton, Rosalind
3205 Moody, Silvia
3103 Moody, Silvia
3102 Moody, Silvia
3139 Dubeck, Julianna
2915 Tom Peters
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2007 Nissan Titan SE — Bedliner, Chrome Bumpers, Fog Lights, Leather, CD/MP3, 18" Alloys — $16,999
2008 Dodge Caliber R/T — Fog Lights, Heated Seats, Keyless Entry, Alloy Wheels, CD, Hatchback — $11,999
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2008 Nissan Rogue S — All Power, Keyless Entry, Alloy Wheels, Traction Control, CD — $15,999
2007 Ford Edge SEL — TV/DVD, Leather, Fog Lights, Keyless Entry, Alloy Wheels, Roof Rack — $17,999
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motoring

Audi's TT RS heads to LA's twisting Mulholland Drive

- Long, winding road is treacherous for this reviewer
- Slick lifestyle car not quite worthy of trek's infamy

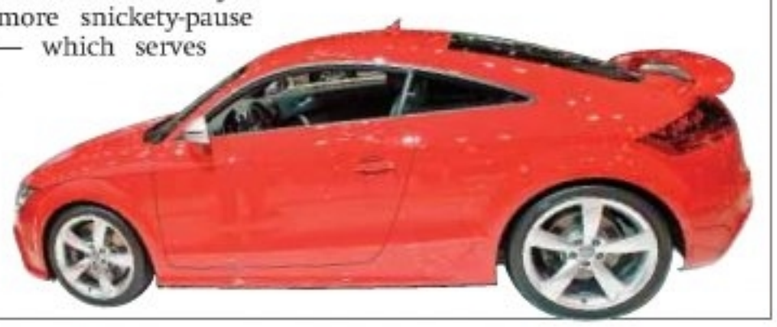
A big rock sits on the outside edge of a notorious switchback on Los Angeles's Mulholland Drive. Too often that ill-placed boulder acts like a black hole: Drivers and motorcyclists try so hard to avoid it that they get pulled in. Ka-boom! That's known in the racing world as target fixation. You drive into what you're looking at.

I'm working the stick shift on the $57,725 Audi TT RS and skirt by the rock with nary a glance, keeping my eyes trained on the road curling uphill. Audi is known for its road-hugging all-wheel-drive and this high-powered version of the TT comes scrambling out of corners like a greyhound after a hare. Best not to let it get away from you.

The original TT was released in 1998, Audi's first real stab at a lifestyle car.

At first I was pleased to find the TT RS equipped with a manual, but it also served as the first disappointment. The throws are longer than expected — less snickety-snick and more snickety-pause — which serves me poorly on Mulholland, where hands and feet are doing a constant mambo as I downshift before tight curves.

Audi's steering also fails in these situations. The wheel is extremely slack at single-digit speeds, which is fine for a parking lot but terrible for precision driving. BLOOMBERG



At a glance

Audi TT RS

- **Speed:** 0 to 60 mph in 4.1 seconds
- **Gas mileage per gallon:** 18 city; 25 highway
- **Price as tested:** $61,125
- **Best feature:** Punchy engine, all-wheel-drive system
- **Worst feature:** Steering

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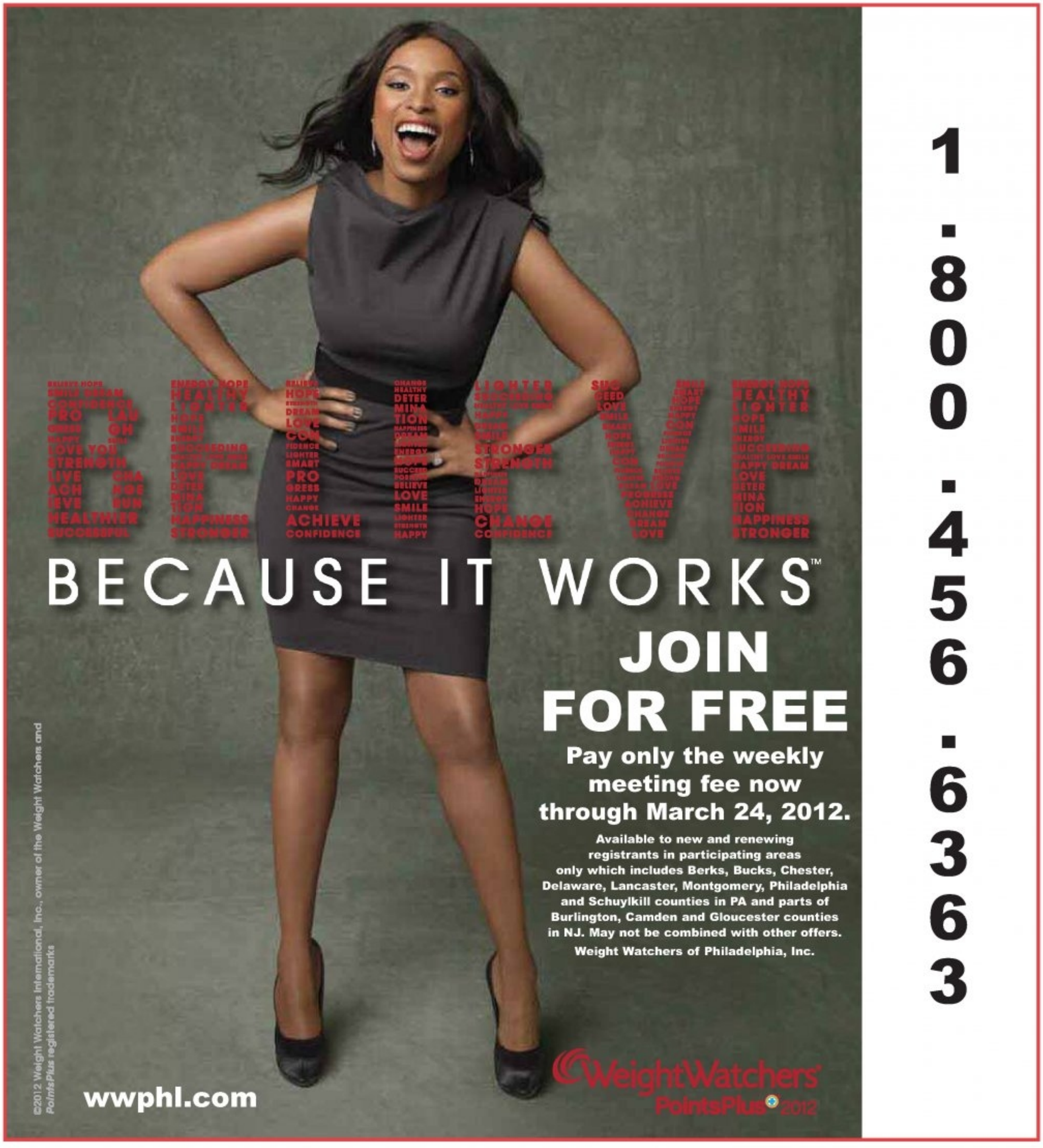
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